

Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Causes - Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the eye. It may be caused by environmental irritants, allergy, or infection which may be viral or bacterial.

Symptoms - Your child may experience itching, redness, watering, or draining of one or both eyes. Following sleep, the eyelids may stick together.

Transmission - Children rub their itchy eyes, collect the drainage, and spread conjunctivitis to others. Schools and day care centers will not permit children to attend with conjunctivitis unless they are being treated with antibiotics. Viral conjunctivitis usually lasts 3-7 days.

Treatment:

- Cleanse the eyes with a warm damp washcloth or cotton balls.
- Use a soothing eye drop such as Tearsol.
- Use antibiotic eye drops if the drainage becomes thick and pus-like. These drops may sometimes be prescribed over the phone.

Prevention - Keeping the hands washed, eyes wiped clean, and using antibiotic eye drops (when indicated) will help prevent spread.

When to Schedule an Appointment:

- Your child is under one year old
- High fever
- Significant eye swelling
- Complaints of pain, decreased vision, or unusual sensitivity to light